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ABSTRACT

Three paragraphs written by three different undergraduate students were examined in order to distinguish between the traditional remedial approach to writing and an approach which perceives writing as a contribution to the specific relationship between teacher and student. Each author was a member of a course whose aim was, among others, to explore the attitudes toward literature, developed between childhood and adulthood. It was shown that a motivational analysis of the paragraphs, as opposed to a clinical analysis of topical syntax and semantics, can more readily bring forth information helpful to this communicating relationship and thus can encourage the transformation of writing from an objective skill to a consciously directed instrument of personality. (KS)

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INTERPERSONAL MOTIVATIONS IN WRITING PEDAGOGY

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ONE OF THE PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF SUBJECTIVE CRITICISM IS THAT TEACHING OURSELVES AND TEACHING OTHERS ARE PART OF THE SAME ACTIVITY. ALTHOUGH THIS HAPPENS FREQUENTLY REGARDLESS OF THE SPECIFIC PEDAGOGICAL ATTITUDE, IT IS ANOTHER MATTER TO CONSCIOUSLY AIM TO ENACT THE PRINCIPLE. TO TEACH WRITING SEEMS ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT WITH SUCH AN AIM IN MIND, BECAUSE, BY MOST PREVAILING "OBJECTIVE" STANDARDS, THE TEACHER ALWAYS WRITES "BETTER" THAN THE STUDENT; THE NATURAL THING TO DO SEEMS TO BE TO TRY TO "RAISE" THE STUDENT TO THE TEACHER'S "LEVEL." IN THE PROCESS, PEDAGOGY IS BIFURCATED INTO TWO ROLE-SPECIFIC PURPOSES: FOR THE STUDENT, IT IS "IMPROVING WRITING SKILLS"; FOR THE TEACHER, IT IS "IMPROVING THE TEACHING OF WRITING SKILLS."

SUBJECTIVE CRITICISM PROPOSES THAT CLASSROOM AIMS ARE MORE PRODUCTIVELY CONCEIVED AS PERSON-SPECIFIC. USING THIS PRESUPPOSITION, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO APPLY A PUBLIC STANDARD OF "GOOD WRITING," AND EACH PERSON'S EFFORTS, TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS', ARE INTERPRETED RELATIVE TO THE LOCAL STUDY CONTEXTS ESTABLISHED BY THE PARTICULAR CLASSROOM. IT IS FURTHER ASSUMED THAT EACH CONSTITUENT OF THE CLASSROOM ALREADY HAS HIS OWN LANGUAGE SYSTEM THAT WILL BE ACTIVATED IN ANY LANGUAGE-BASED UNDERTAKING. FINALLY, ON A PERSON-SPECIFIC BASIS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS SHARE AT LEAST ONE IMPORTANT MOTIVE: THAT IS, TO MAKE THEIR THOUGHTS KNOWN TO EACH OTHER. GIVEN THESE ASSUMPTIONS, THE PEDAGOGY OF WRITING IS BASED ON A PRINCIPLE THAT OTHERS BESIDE MYSELF HAVE ALREADY ARTICULATED, NAMELY, THAT TO WRITE IS TO HAVE SOMETHING PARTICULAR TO SAY TO SOMEONE, OR SOME GROUP, IN PARTICULAR. IF THIS CONCEPTION OF WRITING OBTAINS, NO AMOUNT OF PROSE-PRUNING BY EXPERIENCED TEACHERS CAN PRODUCE IN A STUDENT THE MOTIVATION TO SPEND THE NECESSARY TIME TO BECOME SATISFIED WITH HIS OWN WRITING. ONLY WHEN A PERSON IS ABLE TO TELL HIMSELF THE IMPORTANCE OF WHAT HE HAS TO SAY CAN HE MOBILIZE HIS MENTAL ENERGIES TO WRITE THESE THOUGHTS. ALSO, AS I HAVE DISCUSSED ELSEWHERE, ANY SORT OF QUALITATIVE GRADING OF WRITTEN WORK WILL SERIOUSLY INHIBIT THE SUBJECTIVE PROCESS OF DECIDING WHAT ONE'S THOUGHTS ARE AND OF TELLING THEM TO THE RELEVANT PERSON.

IN THE FOLLOWING REMARKS, I WILL PRESENT THREE PARAGRAPHS BY THREE DIFFERENT UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AND THEN TRY TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE TRADITIONAL REMEDIAL APPROACH TO WRITING AND THE ATTITUDE WHICH UNDERSTANDS WRITING AS A CONTRIBUTION TO A SPECIFIC RELATIONSHIP. I WILL TRY TO SHOW THAT A MOTIVATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE WRITING, AS OPPOSED A CLINICAL ANALYSIS OF TOPICAL SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS, WILL MORE READILY EXPOSE MATERIALS HELPFUL TO BOTH PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNICATING RELATIONSHIP, AND WILL FURTHER MOTIVATE EACH NOT HOW TO WRITE BETTER ABSTRACTLY, BUT HOW TO TRANSFORM WRITING FROM AN OBJECTIVE SKILL TO A CONSCIOUSLY DIRECTED INSTRUMENT OF PERSONALITY.

EACH OF THE "AUTHORS" I WILL DISCUSS WAS IN A COURSE ONE OF WHOSE MAIN AIMS WAS TO EXPLORE HOW OUR ATTITUDES TOWARD LITERATURE DEVELOPED BETWEEN CHILDHOOD AND THE PRESENT. THIS OBVIOUSLY IS NOT A WRITING COURSE, BUT IS ONE THAT DEPENDS FUNDAMENTALLY ON THE REPORTS OF EACH READER OF HIS PERSONAL EXPERIENCES; I KNOW FROM PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH EACH STUDENT THAT THEY WERE GENUINELY MOTIVATED TO PURSUE THIS UNDERTAKING, AND ALSO THAT EACH'S MOTIVES WERE MUCH DIFFERENT FROM ONE ANOTHER'S. FURTHERMORE, THE DIFFERENCES ARE SIGNIFICANT AS REFLECTIONS OF EACH'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ME, THE TEACHER. IN THE LARGER ESSAYS FROM WHICH THE PARAGRAPHS ARE TAKEN, THE PURPOSE WAS TO REPORT, AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE, WHAT INSIGHT INTO ONE'S OWN TASTE MAY BE GAINED BY COMPARING THE CHILDHOOD MEMORY OF A SPEICIFIC WORK OF LITERATURE WITH ONE'S PRESENT RESPONSE TO IT. IT WILL BE OF INTEREST TO NOTE, WITH THIS CONSCIOUS PURPOSE IN MIND, WHAT ACTUALLY APPEARED IN THE REPORTS. IT IS ALSO OF CONSEQUENCE TO CONSIDER IF THE PIECE OF WRITING CAN BE CRITICIZED FOR NOT FULFILLING ITS PURPOSE, IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT I WAS THE ONLY AUDIENCE FOR THE ESSAYS. THE SAMPLES ARE PRESENTED IN THE ORDER OF THEIR (IN MY JUDGMENT) INCREASING RESEMBLANCE TO "EXPOSITORY PROSE." FIRST, HERE IS MS. E'S INTRODUCTION TO HER RESPONSE TO ELEANOR PORTER'S POLLYANNA.

> READING POLLYANNA AGAIN AS AN ADULT WAS LIKE DRAWING A DEEP BREATH OF FRESH AIR. WHAT CAN BE UPLIFTING ABOUT A HEROINE WHO IS GLAD OVER ILL-

HEALTH AND CHIRPS ABOUT BEING 'GLAD' OVER EVERYTHING? OH, DON'T SNEER, READER, AND DON'T CALL ME A SENTIMENTAL OLD SLOB. REMEMBER I'M A GRANDMOTHER; I GREW UP DURING THE DEPRESSION, TAUGHT SCHOOL WAY BACK WHEN THERE STILL WERE ONE ROOMED LITTLE GREY SCHOOL HOUSES, AND LATER TAUGHT IN MODERN CARPETED ONES. I'VE RAISED A FAMILY OF SEVEN CHILDREN, FOUR OF WHO ARE ADULTS; I HAVE HELPED TO NURSE AND BURY MY LOVED ONES AND HAVE GONE AHEAD WITH LIFE. I HAVE NEVER BELIEVED THAT WE OUGHT TO DENY DISCOMFORT, PAIN, AND EVIL; MY PHILOSOPHY HAS BEEN THAT IT IS FAR BETTER TO MEET THE UNKNOWN WITH A CHEER, A SMILE, AND PLENTY OF FAITH IN MANKIND.

A REMEDIAL CRITIQUE OF THIS PARAGRAPH REVIEWS ONLY WHAT IT WRITTEN AND EVALUATES IT ON HOW EXPOSITORY IT IS. THE DIRECT ADDRESS TO THE READER IS VICTORIAN AND IS A DISTRACTING USAGE; WHY NOT SAY, "SOME MAY SNEER AT MY ATTITUDE"? WHY NOT VARY THE SENTENCE OPENINGS INSTEAD OF BEGINNING EACH ONE WITH "I"? IN FACT, WHY USE THE FIRST PERSON AT ALL--IT IS NOT VERY OBJECTIVE. FINALLY, WHO CARES ABOUT YOUR "PHILOSOPHY"; TELL US ONLY THE FACTS. BY THE WAY "BREATH OF FRESH AIR" AND "FAITH IN MANKIND" ARE CLICHES; IMPROVE YOUR VOCABULARY; SAY WHAT THINGS ARE INSTEAD OF WHAT THEY ARE LIKE, AND AVOID VAGUE GENERALITIES.

TO READ THE PARAGRAPH IN TERMS OF ITS MOTIVES MEANS ADMITTING THAT A GREAT DEAL OF "EXTRANEOUS" KNOWLEDGE IS TO BE INVOKED, IN THIS CASE, ALL MY KNOWLEDGE OF MS. E. AS SHE REPORTS, SHE IS A GRANDMOTHER OF ABOUT FIFTY YEARS OLD AND HAS COME TO THE UNIVERSITY SO THAT SHE CAN CERTIFY HERSELF TO JOIN A PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM. THE SPECIFIC PIECE OF INFORMATION NOT INCLUDED IN THE RESPONSE, BUT ONE WHICH MS. HAD EXPLAINED TO ME AT SOME LENGTH WAS THAT THE MARRIAGE THAT PRODUCED THE SEVEN CHILDREN HAD DISSOLVED AND THAT WAS ONE OF HER MAIN REASONS FOR COMING TO THE UNIVERSITY. MY KNOWLEDGE OF THIS MOTIVATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE RENDERS REMEDIAL CONSIDERATIONS TRIVIAL. THE DEEP BREATH OF FRESH AIR IS NOT A CLICHE AT ALL; IT IS EXTREMELY TRUE FOR SOMEONE EXPRESSING GREAT RELIEF. THE REPEATED FIRST PERSON IS AN UNDERSTANDABLE ASSERTION OF HER ACCOMPLISHMENTS; AND A PERSON IN HER CIRCUMSTANCE IN HER AGE USUALLY DOES HAVE A "PHILOSOPHY," AND HER USAGE OF THE TERM IS ACCURATE

EVEN THOUGH IT DOES NOT REFER TO FORMAL OR ACADEMIC ENDEAVORS. MS. F'S PERSPECTIVE ON POLLYANNA IS ONE WHICH HAS FOUND A PERSONAL USE FOR TRYING TO BE "GLAD," AND WHICH PRESENTS HER OWN SENTIMENTALITIES AS DESERVED LUXURIES; SHE TAKES PAINS TO SHOW THAT THE READING EXPERIENCE WAS THE INDULGENCE, RATHER THAN ANY FALSE OPTIMISM. TO POINT OUT THAT SUCH THOUGHTS MIGHT HAVE BEEN SAID DIFFERENTLY COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN A DISCOURAGING RUDENESS.

THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH MS. E WAS ALSO MOTIVATED TO ACT AS MY TEACHER; SHE KNEW THAT I WAS NOT A PARENT, AND THAT I HAD NOT HAD ANY COMPARABLY SERIOUS STRUGGLE IN MY LIFE. TO HER MY CONDESCENSION TOWARD SENTIMENTALITIES WAS A MARK OF YOUTHFUL NAIVETE: WHAT RIGHT DO THE PRIVILEGED AND FORTUNATE HAVE TO DERIDE THE FANCIES OF THE LESS FORTUNATE AND MORE EXPERIENCED? HER STATEMENT WAS VERY CONSCIOUSLY DIRECTED TOWARD ME, AND IT WAS I WHO UNDERSTOOD WHY AND WHAT WAS BEHIND THE TOPICAL LANGUAGE. THE COMMUNICATION COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE SUCCESSFUL; IF THIS IS THE CASE, WHAT MEANING CAN "WRITING SKILLS" HAVE BEYOND THIS?

CONSIDER NOW MR. T'S INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT OF HIS EXPERIENCES WITH EDGAR BURROUGHS'S TARZAN OF THE APES:

> EVERYONE IS PROGRAMMED FOR AN ANNUAL BOUT OF THE FLU. THERE IS NOTHING LIKE BEING SICK. MY INDISPOSITION LASTED ABOUT A WEEK AND HAD FEW SYMPTOMS OTHER THAN AN OCCASIONAL LIGHT COUGH, THE SNIFFLES, AND A SLIGHT TEMPERATURE. THE FLU MEANT PEACE AND QUIET, NO HOMEWORK, AND MEALS WITHOUT TOO MANY VEGETABLES OF THE KIND I DIDN'T LIKE. THE FLU MEANT UNINTERRUPTED READING IN THOSE PRE-TELEVISION DAYS. MY UNTIDY SICK BED WAS PILED HIGH WITH ADVENTURE COMICS AND BOOKS DRAGGED OUT FROM THE CLOSET. IT ALSO MEANT AN OPPORTUNITY TO PESTER MY MOTHER INTO DIPPING INTO HER PURSE TO BUY ME A NEW BOOK I HAD NOT ALREADY READ. NOW PICTURE ME PROPPED UP AMID A HEAP OF PILLOWS, ENJOYING THE SUPERB HIGH PRODUCED IN PRE-TEENS BY A FEVER OF 101. MY MOTHER HAD GONE UPTOWN TO GET MORE MEDICATION, AND HAS PROMISED SHE WILL RETURN WITH SOMETHING GOOD TO EAT, AND SOMETHING GOOD TO READ. AS ALWAYS, SHE RETURNS WITH A SOFT DRINK, AN ICE CREAM, AND A BOOK WITH A FLAMBOYANT COVER. I PLUNGE INTO THIS LATEST FRENZY . . . TARZAN OF THE APES . . . THE STORY GOES RIGHT TO THE HEART OF MY FANTASY WORLD. IT KEEPS ME QUIET FOR HOURS.

IF THIS PARAGRAPH CAME INTO A WRITING "CLINIC," I MIGHT SAY THAT THE WORD "SUSCEPTIBLE" IS MORE ACCURATE THAN "PROGRAMMED"; I COULD REMARK THAT THE WRITER IS USING THE PHRASE "NOW PICTURE ME" WHEN HE IS ACTUALLY PICTURING HIMSELF. I MAY IMPATIENTLY NOTE THAT THE PARAGRAPH CHANGES TENSE IN THE MIDDLE. I MIGHT WONDER AT A CERTAIN DEGREE OF CONTRIVANCE AND ARTIFICE IN THE RECREATION OF THE CHILDHOOD SCENE: TELL YOUR EXPERIENCES, MR. T; DON'T COLOR THE "FACTS" IN WISTFUL PERSPECTIVES.

MY ACQUAINTANCE WITH MR. T MAKES SUCH COMMENTARY INAPPROPRIATE. HE IS JUST MY AGE, WHICH MEANS THAT BOTH OF US HAD "PRE-TELEVISION" CHILDHOODS. BECAUSE WE HAD SPOKEN ABOUT OUR CHILDHOODS AND THE EXPERIENCES OF BEING SICK, SOME OF THE MATERIAL IN HIS PARAGRAPH IS AN ALLUSION TO OUR CONVERSATION, AND TO SOME OF MY REMARKS IN CLASS. MR. T IS PREPARING TO BE A TEACHER, BUT HE WOULD LIKE TO BE A WRITER, AND HE UNDERSTANDS THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN A TEACHER'S SELF-DRAMATIZATION (THAT IS, MINE, IN CLASS) AND A WRITER'S (HIS, IN HIS SELF-DESCRIPTIONS). HE IS MAKING USE OF OUR PRIVATE AGREEMENT ON HOW TO INTERPRET CERTAIN KIND OF SELF-DESCRIPTION, SO THAT HIS SLIGHT ARTIFICE IS A KIND OF CODE BETWEEN US "BOYS" AND AN ATTEMPT TO INDULGE HIS INTEREST IN CREATIVE WRITING. THE PHRASE "NOW PICTURE ME" IS ADDRESSED TO ME, AND HE KNOWS THAT I KNOW THAT HE IS ASKING ME TO PICTURE HIM AS HE PICTURES HIMSELF. IT IS THIS KIND OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING THAT MAKES COMMUNICATION POSSIBLE; THE UNDERSTANDING IS NEVER APPARENT IN THE ACTUAL PIECE OF WRITING, AND CANNOT BE ASSUMED FROM THE WRITING.

AT THE TIME OF WRITING MR. T WAS CONCERNED ABOUT HIS YOUNG SON WHO DOES NOT LIVE WITH HIM. HIS IMAGES OF BOYHOOD ARE COMPLICATED BY THE TACIT COMPARISON OF HIS OWN BOYHOOD WITH HIS SON'S, PERHAPS TO MR. T'S ADVANTAGE AND WITH A SENSE OF UNFULFILLED RESPONSIBILITY. SINCE I DO NOT HAVE A SON, I FELT HE HAD HAD AN EXPERIENCE HE COULD TEACH ME ABOUT--NAMELY, A FATHER'S FEELINGS ABOUT A SON WHOSE MOTHER IS INDULGING HIM; IT IS COMPLETELY IMPOSSIBLE TO GET SUCH A MEANING FROM THIS PARAGRAPH WITHOUT HAVING HAD MY SPECIFIC RELATIONSHIP WITH MR. T. IN VIEW

OF THESE THOUGHTS, WITH WHICH I "SEE" THE PARAGRAPH, ISOLATING TECHNICALITIES OF GRAMMAR AND DICTION IS NOT RELEVANT TO THE MAIN MOVEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN MR. T AND ME. MR. T'S STATEMENT, LIKE MS. E'S, WAS WELL SUITED TO OUR PEDAGOGICAL AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP.

CONSIDER NOW ONE OF MS. J'S OPENING STATEMENTS TO THE DISCUSSION OF HER CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE OF "CINDERELLA."

> "CINDERELLA" WAS ON OF THOSE TALES WHICH CAME TO LIFE WHEN IT WAS TOLD TO ME. I CAN REMEMBER FEELING UNCOMFORTABLE AND EVEN SOMEWHAT UPSET UPON BEING TOLD CINDERELLA'S STEPMOTHER AND SISTERS HAD MISTREATED HER. I CAN ALSO REMEMBER MY ELATION FOR HER WHEN SHE WAS ALLOWED TO GO TO THE BALL, AND THIS EXCITEMENT PEAKED, FINALLY, WHEN THE GLASS SLIPPER FIT ON TO CINDERELLA'S FOOT. NOW I THOUGHT, SHE WOULD BE RELIEVED FROM HER LONG SUFFERINGS AT HOME, FOR THE PRINCE WAS SURE TO RIGHT THE INJUSTICES THAT HAD BEEN BROUGHT UPON HER.

I THINK THIS PARAGRAPH IS AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD EXPOSITORY PROSE AND COMMUNICATIVE FAILURE. THE FEELINGS AND EXPERIENCES ARE DISTINCTLY REPORTED; THE LANGUAGE IS HISTORICAL AND LITERALLY ACCURATE: "I CAN REMEMBER . . . ", "NOW I THOUGHT," AND SO ON. IT IS ALSO A GOOD EXAMPLE OF A TOPIC PARAGRAPH WHICH INTRODUCES A LONG DISCUSSION WITH A GENERAL STATEMENT THAT IS CLEAR AND DIRECT.

MY SENSE OF ITS FAILURE IS PERSONAL AND NOT OBJECTIVE. MS. J IS A RELATIVELY TYPICAL UNDERGRADUATE, TWENTY YEARS OLD, AND UNDER THE USUAL PRESSURES TO DO WELL IN SCHOOL. SHE WAS ESPECIALLY EAGER AND DILIGENT IN MEETING WITH ME IN ORDER TO MAKE SURE THAT SHE WAS DOING "THE RIGHT THING," THAT SHE UNDERSTOOD WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOUT, AND THAT HER OWN WORK REFLECTED WHAT SHE THOUGHT I WANTED HER TO DO. OFTEN, IN CLASS, SHE WAS WITTY, AGGRESSIVE, AND DEFIANT IN A RESPECTFUL WAY. FINALLY, SHE WAS VERY MUCH CONCERNED THAT SHE TENDED TO CONCEAL HER FEELINGS IN WAYS UNKNOWN TO HER, AND PERHAPS IN OUR REPEATED MEETINGS I COULD DISCLOSE THE DIFFICULTY. IN SOME IMPORTANT RESPECTS, SHE FELT THAT I DID HELP HER OUT, BUT THERE WERE STILL MANY STATEMENTS OF THE KIND CITED ABOVE.

MY SENSE OF ATTENUATED COMMUNICATION IN THIS STATEMENT IS RELATED TO MY BELIEF THAT IT IS AN ACCURATE REFLECTION OF MY PEDAGOGICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH MS. J. PARTICULARLY, I HAD NOT SUCCEEDED IN OVERCOMING HER HABIT OF ORIENTING HER WORK MOTIVES FIRST TOWARD HIGH GRADES AND CONSEQUENTLY TOWARD TRYING TO MEET WHAT SHE THOUGHT WERE THE TEACHER'S DEMANDS—THAT IS TOWARD CONFORMING WITH A VIEW TO THE REWARD. AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER WHEN, AFTER THIS ESSAY WAS SUBMITTED, MS. J LEFT MY OFFICE SOMEWHAT IRRITATED THAT I WOULD NOT TELL HER, BEFORE OTHERS IN THE CLASS, WHAT HER GRADE WAS. (THERE WERE ONLY TWO POSSIBLE GRADES, GIVEN ON THE BASIS OUTLINED AT THE END OF <u>READINGS AND FEELINGS</u>.) IT BECAME FAIRLY CLEAR IN THE LAST TWO CONVERSATIONS WITH HER THAT HER INITIATIVES WERE OF THE FORM: I WILL DISCUSS MY WORK WITH YOU AS MANY TIMES AS I NEED TO IN ORDER TO GET AN "A." THIS ISSUE SUPERVENED IN OUR RELATIONSHIP, AND I WAS NOT ABLE TO REDUCE MS. J'S PRE-EXISTING, SELF-ADMITTED INHIBITION ABOUT REPORTING FEELINGS. TO ME, THE PARAGRAPH REFLECTS COOPERATION WITHOUT SUFFICIENT INVOLVEMENT.

THERE WAS SOME SUCCESS. SHE REPORTED THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME IN HER SCHOOL CAREER SHE HAD EVER TO RECORD AND OTHERWISE STUDY HER FEELINGS ABOUT LITERATURE. SHE BELIEVED, IN PRINCIPLE, THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO HER TO UNDERTAKE SUCH PROJECTS; OTHER PARTS OF HER WORK REFLECTED COMMUNICATIVE ATTITUDES SIMILAR TO THOSE OF MS. E AND MR. T. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, I THINK I FAILED TO CULTIVATE WITH HER THE ACTIVE SUBJECTIVE LANGUAGE THAT WOULD SUPERSEDE THE MOTIVES TOWARD TECHNICAL CONFORMITY IN THE SERVICE OF OBJECTIVE ACADEMIC SUCCESS.

IN EACH OF THE INSTANCES I HAVE CITED, MY MAIN MEANS OF INTERPRETING THE WRITTEN MATERIALS WAS MY GRADUALLY CONSTRUCTED SENSE OF RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STUDENTS. NO MATTER HOW EXPERIENCED IN WRITING I MAY BE, THIS EXPERIENCE DOES NOT AMOUNT TO OBJECTIVE AUTHORITY IN THE SKILL OF WRITING, AND IT CANNOT BE USED TO MEASURE ANYONE ELSE'S ALLEGED SKILLS. WHAT DOES CREATE MY AUTHORITY IS THE CLASSROOM EXPOSURE OF MY LANGUAGE SYSTEM. STUDENTS SLOWLY ASSEMBLE A SERIES OF THEIR SUBJECTIVE JUDGMENTS OF WHICH FEATURES IN MY LANGUAGE SYSTEM ARE ASSIMILABLE

TO THEIR OWN. THEY DEVELOP AN OVERALL SENSE OF WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY TO ME, AFTER HEARING WHAT I HAVE TO SAY TO THEM. IN THIS PROCESS, OUR RESPECTIVE HABITS OF PERCEIVING AND EVALUATING OTHER PEOPLE COME INTO PLAY, AS WELL AS OUR CONCEPTIONS OF HOW TO USE AND DEAL WITH AUTHORITY. THE EXPERIENCE AND USE OF LANGUAGE IN THE CLASSROOM IS THE MOST VIABLE GROUNDWORK ON WHICH TO RAISE ISSUES OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT. THERE IS NO USE IN TRYING TO DEPERSONALIZE THE PEDAGOGICAL SITUATION, BECAUSE ANY SORT OF TEACHING INVOLVES THE COOPERATION OF TWO OR MORE MINDS, AND NOT THE INVOCATION OF PRE-GIVEN ROLES.

IN THE EAGERNESS OF LITERATE SOCIETIES TO PERPETUATE LITERACY, THE TENDENCY HAS BEEN TO CONCEIVE OF READING AND WRITING AS FORMS OF KNOWLEDGE THAT CAN BE TAUGHT AND UNDERSTOOD SCIENTIFICALLY. THIS MEANS THAT LANGUAGE AND ITS CONSTITUENT FEATURES HAD TO BE OBJECTIFIED, THAT IS, SET APART FROM ALL OTHER EXPERIENCE. WRITING IS ONE OF THESE FEATURES AND ITS OBJECTIFICATION CONSISTS IN THINKING OF IT AS A SKILL, LIKE DRIVING OR TELEVISION REPAIRING. HISTORICALLY, HOWEVER, LANGUAGE, AND ESPECIALLY LITERACY, HAS BEEN THE PRIVILEGE AND INSTRUMENT OF THE POWERFUL, THE WEALTHY, AND THE AUTHORITATIVE. WHEN THE VAST MAJORITY OF PEOPLE WERE ILLITERATE, THE FEW WHO COULD READ AND WRITE UNDERSTOOD THE ENORMOUS SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE, USED IT TO CREATE TRANSCENDANT, FINAL "TEXTS" THAT WERE SUPPOSED TO BE TAKEN AS THE FINAL AUTHORITY OF THE UNIVERSE--BY THE POOR AND ILLITERATE. LANGUAGE WAS USED AS THE INSTRUMENT FOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE "FITTEST," OR, MORE ACCURATELY, THE LUCKIEST.

THE ISOLATION OF WRITING SKILLS FROM THEIR CONTINUING ROOTEDNESS IN SPEECH AND THOUGHT AND IN INTERPERSONAL, ETHICAL BEHAVIORS, IS THE VESTIGIAL FORM OF THIS TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS ATTITUDE TOWARD LANGUAGE WHERE THE AUTHORITY OF THE WRITTEN WORD WAS UNIMPEACHABLE AND THE MERE ATTAINMENT OF LITERACY WOULD RENDER ONE A MEMBER OF THE ELECT. IN OUR SOCIETY LITERACY HAS BEEN THE MAIN INSTRUMENT OF REDUCING THE POWER AND INFLUENCE, AND EVEN THE EXISTENCE OF, AN ELECT OLIGARCHY. THE LARGE NETWORK OF PEDAGOGICAL ESTABLISHMENTS GREW FROM THE CONSCIOUS INTENTION

OF PREVIOUS GENERATIONS TO PROVIDE THE INSTRUMENTS OF SELF-DIRECTION FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL. THE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS ARE ETHICAL, SOCIAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND INTELLECTUAL ALL AT ONCE. LANGUAGE IS THE SUBJECT THAT MOST READILY ENGAGES THESE MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS. WRITING IS THE MEANS OF NEGOTIATING LANGUAGE AWARENESS AND SELF-AWARENESS; TO TREAT IT AS A SKILL IS TO REDUCE THE OVERALL POTENTIALITIES OF LANGUAGE. NO TEACHER CAN FORCE A STUDENT TO GROW OR DEVELOP. THE BEST I THINK WE CAN DO IS TO CULTIVATE MOTIVATION--IN THE CASE OF WRITING, THE MOTIVES TO TELL WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO PEOPLE OF IMPORTANCE TO THE INDIVIDUAL.

THE MOST CERTAIN, BUT ALSO THE MOST DIFFICULT, MEANS OF CREATING MOTIVATION IN THE CLASSROOM IS TO TELL WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO ME TO THOSE I CLAIM TO TEACH. IF WHAT I SAY AND WHAT I WRITE ARE AUTHENTICALLY AND SECURELY MOTIVATED, I WILL SEE OTHERS' WRITING THE SAME WAY, AND THE ACTIVITY OF TEACHING MYSELF AND TEACHING OTHERS WILL BE THE SAME ENTERPRISE.